A PARALLEL;

In the manner of PLUTARCH:

Between a moſt celebrated

Man of FLORENCE;

And ONE, ſcarce ever heard of, in

ENGLAND.

By the Reverend Mr. SPENCE.

--------*Parvis componere magna.*------VIRGIL.

PRINTED AT STRAWBERRY-HILL,

By WILLIAM ROBINSON;

And Sold by Meſſieurs DODSLEY, at Tully's-Head, Pall-Mall;

For the Benefit of Mr. HILL.

M DCC LVIII.

A PARALLEL;

In the manner of PLUTARCH:

Between a moſt celebrated

THE

Man of FLORENCE;

LIFE

OF

ENGLAND.

By the Reverend Mr. SPENCE.

SIGN. MAGLIABECHI.

A MONG the number of eminent men which the city of Florence has produced ſince the revival of literature, one of the moſt extraordinary, and of the moſt celebrated in his time, was Signior Magliabechi.

And Sold by Mellichamp, Dodsley, at Tully's Head, Pall-Mall;

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M.DCC.LVIII.

THE LIFE OF SIGN^R. MAGLIABECHI.

AMONG the number of eminent men which the city of Florence has produced ſince the revival of litterature, one of the moſt extraordinary, and of the moſt celebrated in his time, was ANTONIO MAGLIABECHI: And indeed there

are ſuch uncommon things aſſerted of him, and ſo far exceeding the bounds of probability, as may ſeem to require ſome apology even for repeating them; it may therefore not be improper to premiſe, that the chief authorities on which the following account of him is founded, are Florentines; that the Italians in general, and the Florentines in particular, delight in a higher and larger way of ſpeaking than is uſual among us; that they deal much in ſuperlatives; and that their ſuperlative,

like

like that in the Latin language from which it is derived, signifies, VERY MUCH; as well as, THE MOST: That whatever I have quoted from books, is, in general very punctually referred to in the notes, and often, the very words of the authors inserted; and that whatever is not so authorized, is what I have learned in conversation with gentlemen of the city of Florence, who were personally acquainted with MAGLIABECHI, men of learning and reputation, and of very good credit, both for know-

ledge

ledge and veracity. Thus aſſiſted, I have undertaken to give ſome account of this extraordinary, and ſo much admired man.

MAGLIABECHI was born at Florence on the 29th of October*, in the year 1633. His parents were of ſo low and mean a rank, that they were very well ſatisfied when they had got him into the ſervice of a man who ſold herbs and

* From his article in Moreri's Dictionary. Niceron, in his Memoires pour ſervir a l' Hiſtoire des Hommes Illuſtres, ſays, it was on the 28th.

fruit.

fruit. He had never learned to read; and yet he was perpetually poring over the leaves of old books, that were uſed as waſte paper in his maſter's ſhop. A bookſeller who lived in the neighbourhood, and who had often obſerved this, and knew the boy could not read, aſked him one day, "What he meaned "by ſtaring ſo much on printed "paper?" He ſaid, "That he "did not know how it was, "but that he loved it of all "things; that he was very un-"eaſy in the buſineſs he was in,

"and

"and ſhould be the happieſt "creature in the world, if he "could live with him, who had "always ſo many books about "him." The bookſeller was aſtoniſhed, and yet pleaſed with his anſwer; and at laſt told him, that he ſhould not be diſinclined to take him into his ſhop, if his maſter would be willing to part with him. Young MAGLIABECHI thanked him with tears of joy in his eyes; and his happineſs was highly encreaſed, when his maſter, on the bookſeller's deſire, gave him leave

leave to go where he pleaſed. He went therefore directly to his new and much deſired buſineſs*; and had not been long in it, before he could find out any book that was aſked for, as readily as the bookſeller could himſelf. Some time after this he learned to read, and as ſoon

* This account I had from a gentleman of Florence, who was very well acquainted with MAGLIABECHI and his family: There are other accounts very different from this. Salvini ſays that he was at firſt, in an honourable, but not litterary employ: And Father Niceron, that he was apprentice to a goldſmith. I do not pretend to determine, which of the three accounts are the trueſt.

as he had, he was always ‡ read-ing when he could.

He ſeems never to have ap-plied himſelf to any particular ſtudy. A paſſion for reading was his ruling paſſion; and a prodigious memory his great ta-lent. He read every book al-moſt indifferently, as they hap-pened to come into his hands.

‡ "Ne' Libri, che eſſer dovevano di tutto il "ſuo vivere compagni inſeparabili; ne' Libri, "uniche delizie, unici ſuoi amori, ſ'intrat-"teneva." *Salvini, Ora. Fun. p.* 7. And he ſpeaks of his, "Virtuoſa Bramaſia di ſempre "legere," juſt after; and confirms theſe paſſages in ſeveral other places. *See pages* 9, 11, 22, *and* 27; *ibid.*

He

He read them with a ſurprizing quickneſs, and yet retained not only the ſenſe of what he read, but often all the words, and the very manner of ſpelling them, if there was any thing peculiar of that kind in any author.

His extraordinary application, and talents, ſoon recommended him to Ermini*, and Marmi†, the Great Duke's librarian. He

* Librarian to the Cardinal of Medicis.

† Father Niceron names theſe two as his great friends; and it may probably be of the latter that Salvini ſays, "Un nobile, letterato, "e generoſo ſpirito della citta noſtro dal ſuo im-

"piego

was by them introduced into the converſations of the learned, and made known at court: And began to be looked upon every where as a prodigy ‖, particularly for his vaſt and unbounded memory.

It is ſaid, that there was a trial made of the force of his memory, which, if true, is

" piego il levò; e nelle letterarie converſazioni " lo introduſſe; e alla Real Corte di Toſcana " il ſe conoſcere." *Or. Fun. p.* 7.

‖ " Fu egli ammirato fin da principio, come " un prodigio, di quella parte principalmente " dell'Anima che Memoria s'appella." *Ib. p.* 8

very

very amazing. A gentleman at Florence, who had written a piece which was to be printed, lent the manuſcript to MAGLIABECHI; and ſome time after it had been returned with thanks, came to him again with a melancholy face, and told him of ſome invented accident, by which, he ſaid, he had loſt his manuſcript: The author ſeemed almoſt inconſolable for the loſs of his work, and intreated MAGLIABECHI, whoſe character for remembering what he read was already very great, to try to re-

collect

collect as much of it as he poſſibly could, and write it down for him, againſt his next viſit. MAGLIABECHI aſſured him he would, and on ſetting about it, wrote down the whole manuſcript*, without miſſing a word,

* There is, I believe, at leaſt as much difference in the Engliſh and Florentine ways of ſpeaking, when we praiſe or extol any thing, as there may be between the Florentine and the Oriental. A Florentine will call a good tolerable houſe, for inſtance, a PALLACE; and a little ſnug flower-garden, a PARADISE. This, and all the other anecdotes in this account are from Florentines, as I have ſaid before, and certainly in moſt of them, ſome allowance ſhould be made for the Florentine way of ſpeaking; I having generally expreſſed what I had from them in their language, litterally in our own.

or

or even varying any where from the ſpelling.

By treaſuring up every thing he read in ſo ſtrange a manner, or at leaſt the ſubject, and all the principal parts of all the books he ran over; his head became at laſt, as one of his acquaintance expreſſed it to me, "An univerſal Index both "of titles and matter."

By this time MAGLIABECHI was grown ſo famous for the vaſt extent of his reading, and his amazing retention of what

he

he had read, that it began to grow common amongſt the learned to conſult him, when they were writing on any ſubject: Thus, for inſtance, if a prieſt was going to compoſe a panegyric on ſuch a ſaint, and came to communicate his deſign to MAGLIABECHI, he would immediately tell him, who had ſaid any thing of that ſaint, and in what part of their works, and that ſometimes, to the number of above a hundred authors. He would tell them not only who had treated of their

ſubject

ſubject deſignedly, but of ſuch alſo as had touched upon it only accidentally, in writing on other ſubjects; both which he did with the greateſt exactneſs, naming the author, the book, the words, and often the very number of the page * in which they were inſerted. He did this ſo often, ſo readily, and ſo exactly, that he came at laſt to be looked upon almoſt as an

* Salvini expreſſes this yet more ſtrongly: "Et non che il libro; ma la pagina, la "Colonna, il verſo, ne additava." *Or. Fun. p.* 15.

oracle*, for the ready and full anſwers that he gave to all queſtions, that were propoſed to him in any faculty or ſcience whatever.

It was his great eminence this way, and his vaſt, I had almoſt ſaid, inconceivable knowledge of books, that induced the Great Duke, Coſimo the

* "Il MAGLIABECHI fu tanto rinomato per "la ſua Biblioteca; e per il vaſto ſuo ſapere, che "ſembiava quaſi un oracolo, per le pronte e ſaggie "ſue riſpoſte, in qualunque facoltà foſſe ricer-"cato." Mancurti, in his life of Creſcembeni. *See the latter's hiſtory of Italian poetry*, T. 6. p. 233.

Third,

Third, to do him the honour of making him his librarian; and what a happineſs muſt it have been to MAGLIABECHI, who delighted in nothing ſo much as in reading, to have the ſupreme command and uſe of ſuch a collection of books as that in the Great Duke's palace. He was alſo very converſant with the books in the Lorenzo library*; and had the keeping of thoſe of Leopoldo, and Franceſco Maria, the two Cardinals of Tuſcany.

* Salvini; *Or. Fun. p.* 10 *and* 11.

And yet even all this did did not ſatisfy his extenſive appetite; for one who knew him well told me, "One may ſay, "that he had read almoſt all "books:" By which as he explained himſelf, he meaned the greateſt part of thoſe printed before his time*, and all in it: For it was latterly a general

* Salvini goes farther, for he ſays; "Non "vi era minimo libretto, ch' egli non conoſceſſe." *Or. Fun. p.* 15. And Creſcembeni, ſpeaking of a diſpute whether a certain poem had ever been printed or not, concludes it had not, "Becauſe "MAGLIABECHI had never ſeen it." *Iſtoria della Volg. Poes.* T. 4. p. 23.

cuſtom,

cuſtom, not only among the authors, but the printers too of thoſe times, to make him a preſent of a copy of whatever they publiſhed; which, by the way, muſt have been a conſiderable help towards the very large collection of books, which he himſelf made.

To read ſuch vaſt numbers as he did, he latterly made uſe of a method as extraordinary, as any thing I have hitherto mentioned of him. When a book firſt came into his

his hands, he would look the title page all over, then dip here and there in the preface, dedication, and advertiſements, if there were any; and then caſt his eyes on each of the diviſions, the different ſections, or chapters, and then he would be able for ever to know what that book contained: For he remembered as ſteadily, as he conceived rapidly.

It was after he had taken to this way of fore-ſhortening his reading, if I may be allowed ſo odd

odd an expreſſion; and I think, I rather may, becauſe he conceived the matter almoſt as compleatly in this ſhort way, as if he had read it at full length; that a prieſt who had compoſed a panegyric on one of his favorite ſaints, brought it to MAGLIABECHI, as a preſent. He read it over the very way above mentioned; only the title page, and the heads of the chapters; and then thanked him very kindly, "For his ex-"cellent treatiſe." The author, in ſome pain, aſked him, "whe-"ther

"ther that was all that he in-
"tended to read of his book?"
MAGLIABECHI cooly anſwered,
"Yes; for I know very well
"every thing that is in it."
My author for this anecdote endeavoured to account for it in the following manner. MAGLIABECHI, ſays he, knew all that the writers before had ſaid of this ſaint; he knew this particular father's turn and character; and from thence judged, what he would chuſe out of them, and what he would omit. If this way of accounting for

ſo

ſo extraordinary a thing may not ſeem ſatisfactory to ſome, it muſt at leaſt be allowed to be ingenious by all.

MAGLIABECHI had a local memory too of the places where every book ſtood; as in his maſter's ſhop at firſt, and in the Pitti, and ſeveral other libraries afterwards: And ſeems to have carried this farther, than only in relation to the collections of books with which he was perſonally acquainted. One day the Great Duke ſent for

him after he was his librarian, to ask him whether he could get him a book that was particularly scarce. "No, Sir," answered MAGLIABECHI, "it is "impossible; for there is but "one in the world; that is in "the Grand Signior's library at "Constantinople, and is the "seventh book on the second "shelf on the right hand as "you go in."

Though MAGLIABECHI must have lived so sedentary a life, with such an intense and almost perpetual

perpetual application to books, yet he arrived to a good old age. He died in his eighty-first year, on July 14, 1714*. By his will he left a very fine library, of his own collection, for the uſe of the public, with a fund to maintain it; and whatever ſhould remain over, to the poor.

He was not an eccleſiaſtic, but choſe never to marry; and was quite negligent, or rather

* Lavocat; in his Dictionnaire Hiſtorique Portatif. Art. MAGLIABECHI: Probably, from Salvini's *Or. Fun. p.* 29.

quite ſlovenly in his dreſs. His appearance was ſuch, as muſt have been far from engaging the affection of a lady, had he addreſſed himſelf to any; and his face in particular, as appears by the ſeveral repreſentations of him, whether in his buſts, medals, pictures, or prints, would rather have prejudiced his ſute, than advanced it: He received his friends, and thoſe who came to conſult him in any points of litterature, in a civil and obliging manner; though in general he had almoſt the air of a ſavage,

vage, and even affected it; together with a cinical, or contemptuous ſmile *, which ſcarce rendered his look the more agreable. Salvini himſelf, juſt after he has been ſpeaking of his perſon, cannot help thinking of the ‖ ſatyrs that Socrates was compared to of old.

In his manner of living, he affected the character of Diogenes; three hard eggs, and a draught or two of water, was his uſual repaſt. When any

* Or. Fun. p. 13.

‖ Ibid, p. 18.

one

one went to ſee him, they moſt uſually found him lolling in a ſort of fixed wooden cradle, in the middle of his ſtudy, with a multitude of books, ſome ‡ thrown in heaps, and others ſcattered about the floor, all round him; and this his cradle, or bed, was attached to the neareſt piles of books by a number of cobwebs: At their entrance, he commonly uſed to call out to them; "Not to hurt

‡ He uſed ſometimes to loll and ſleep upon piles of them: "Cui letto erano i libri," ſays Salvini, "e ſopra eſſi, (chi 'l crederà?) ripoſava." *Or. Fun. p.* 27.

"his

"his ſpiders!" From this ſingle anecdote we may conclude, that where a great friend of his commends him for his "gentillez-"za‖;" it muſt be underſtood, of his obligingneſs in anſwering any queſtions that were put to him in litterary affairs; and not of the genteelneſs of his perſon or behaviour, in general.

MAGLIABECHI, was early made a member of The ARCADI; a ſociety eſtabliſhed at Rome,

‖ "Appreſſo l' incomparabile, e per ſapere e "per gentillezza, ANTONIO MAGLIABECHI." *Creſc. T.* 3. *p.* 207.

toward

toward the end of the laſt century, for the revival of true taſte, in poetry, eloquence, and the polite arts. Moſt of the eminent people all over Italy, and many of other countries, are enrolled in it; and though of ſo much later date than many of the other academies in Italy, there is ſcarce any one of them, perhaps, that can boaſt the names of ſo many kings and princes, or popes and cardinals, as appear in their liſt. Their aſſemblies and games have ‡ for

‡ Ever ſince the year 1726.

many

many years been kept in a theatre built on purpoſe for them in the gardens, now belonging to the King of Naples, on the Palatine-hill in Rome. It is here too that they have uſed, almoſt ever ſince their inſtitution, to ſet up memorial inſcriptions to ſome of the moſt worthy of their members. There is one to MAGLIABECHI, in the fourth year of the ſix hundred and twenty-fifth Olympiad, for they have revived that antient way of reckoning, in which he is ſtiled; "Their

"counſellor, or oracle, in all "ſorts of learning ‖."

Creſcembeni, the great promoter and ſoul of this ſociety for ſo many years, and § preſident of it ‡ from it's firſt eſtabliſhment, to the end of his own life, has given the world a fuller account of theſe Arcadians, than is any where elſe to be met with, in his hiſtory of Italian poetry. He was a

‖ OMNIGENAE ERUDITIONIS CONSULTO.

§ Cuſtode.

‡ From 1690, to 1728.

particular

particular ‖ friend of MAGLIABECHI; with whom he got acquainted, when he was obliged to go into Tuſcany for his health. He ſpeaks of him frequently in his hiſtory juſt mentioned, and never without ſome encomium. It is ſufficient, I think, to ſay here, that among ſo many, and ſo various commendations, the loweſt title

‖ Creſcembeni was at Florence in 1699, where he got acquainted with Buonarroti, Salvini, Accolti, and Averani; "Uomini tutti," ſays my author, "e per chiara fama, e per ec-"cellenza di dottrina, molto illuſtri; e ſopra "ogni altro, da ANTONIO MAGLIABECHI." *Mancurti.*

which he ever gives him, is that of "the eminent MAGLIA-"BECHI‡."

Moreri § says, "That he was "famous all over Europe, for "his great knowledge in books, "and in litterary history:" And Lavocat §, "That he was con-"sulted by all the learned in "Europe; and highly com-"mended by them all." And

‡ "Dall insigne ANTONIO MAGLIABECHI." *T.* 3. *p.* 44. The other generally run thus: "Eruditissimo." *T.* 1. *p.* 201. "Il degnissimo." *T.* 4. 105.-----"il celebratissimo." *T.* 2. *p.* 410. -----"l' incomparabile." *T.* 4. *p.* 26.

§§ See his article in their dictionaries.

the

the above cited Creſcembeni confirms what is ſaid by both of them; and adds‡, 'That as he 'cannot find out any commen-'dation proportioned to his im-'menſe erudition, after ſo many 'that have been beſtowed upon 'him by the moſt learned per-'ſons of his times, he ſhould 'chuſe to repeat that of one of 'the moſt eminent among them, 'Cardinal Norris, who in one 'of his works calls him §, "The "moſt learned man, and the

‡ Iſtoria della Volgàr Poeſia. *T.* 1. *p.* 187.

§ "Eruditiſſimum, et ubique non barbara-"rum gentium laudatiſſimum virum."

"moſt

"moſt applauded in all nations "of the world, which are not "inhabited by barbarians."

Salvini made his funeral oration, in the Florentine academy; by which MAGLIABECHI had been choſen for their ſecretary annually, for ſeveral years * before his death: And even in the midſt of that aſſembly of ſo many learned and eminent men, calls him †, "The prin-"cipal ornament of his coun-"try." The whole ſpeech con-

* Or. Fun. p. 26. † *Ibid.* p. 4.

ſiſts

ſiſts of compliments to his merit, or excuſes for what might ſeem amiſs in him; and in the courſe of it, he gives him the titles of "The great MAGLIABECHI! ‖"-----"The univerſal "library ‡;"----"A prodigy of "learning! §"--and ſome others, which may perhaps ſound better in Italian, than they would in Engliſh.

Thus lived and died MAGLIABECHI, in the midſt of the

‖ *Ibid.* p. 5. ‡ p. 17. § p. 23.

public

public applauſe; and with ſuch an affluence, for all the latter part of his life, as very few perſons have ever procured by their knowledge or learning.

THE LIFE OF MR. HILL.

ROBERT HILL, ſon of Robert and Phæbe Hill, was born January 11, 1699, at Miſwell, a little village of only three or four houſes, near Tring in Hertfordſhire. His mother's maiden name was Clark; ſhe loſt her huſband

within the year; returned to her own family at Miſwell; and about five years after, was married to Thomas Robinſon, a taylor at Buckingham. On her going thither, ſhe left our ROBERT, the only ſon of her firſt marriage, with his grand-mother at Miſwell; who taught him to read, and ſent him to ſchool for ſeven or eight weeks to learn to write; which was all the ſchooling he ever had. In the year 1710, ſhe removed with her family from Miſwell to Tring-grove; where little ROBERT

BERT was employed in driving the plough, and other country buſineſs, for his uncle. But they finding this rather too much for his conſtitution, which was but weakly, thought an eaſy trade would be better for him; and ſo bound him (1714) apprentice to his father-in-law, Robinſon, the taylor, at Buckingham.

It was about two years after (1716) he was prentice, that he firſt happened to get an imperfect Accidence and Gram-

mar, and about three quarters of a Littleton's dictionary, into his poſſeſſion. From the firſt moment of ſo great an acquiſition, he was reading whenever he could; and as they would ſcarce allow him any time from his work by day, he uſed to procure candles as privately as he could, and indulge himſelf in the violent paſſion he had for reading, for good part of the nights. He wanted greatly to learn Latin; why, does not appear: For he himſelf does not remember any other reaſon for

it

it at preſent, than that he might be able to read a few Latin epitaphs in their church. However that be, this purſuit of his was ſoon interrupted (1717), by the ſmall-pox coming into Buckingham, and growing ſo violent there, that his friends ſent him to Tring-grove; and, in the hurry, his books were left behind him. At the Grove, he was employed in keeping his uncle's ſheep; and ſpeaks of that occupation in as high a ſtile of happineſs, as the romance-writers talk of their Arcadian

cadian ſwains: But what made it ſo happy to him was, as he himſelf expreſſes it, "That he "could lye under a hedge, and "read all day long." His ſtudy here conſiſted only of the Practice of Piety, the Whole Duty of Man, and Mauger's French grammar. Theſe he read over and over ſo often, that he had them almoſt all by heart; and has a great deal of them ſtill. He ſtayed there a year and a quarter; and on his return to Buckingham (1719), he was highly delighted at ſeeing his old

old friend the Latin grammar again; and immediately renewed his acquaintance with it. In this ſecond attempt of his for Latin, he was aſſiſted by ſome of his play-fellows among the boys at the free-ſchool at Buckingham. He would do any thing that was in his power to ſerve them, if they would tell him the Engliſh of ſuch words, or ſuch rules in his grammar, as he found the moſt difficult to underſtand: And by ſuch ſlow and laborious means, enabled himſelf to read a good

part

part of a Latin teſtament which he had purchaſed, and a Cæſar's commentaries that had been given him, before he was out of his apprenticeſhip.

Soon after he was out of his time, he married (1721); and had Horace and a Greek teſtament added to his books, by the goodneſs of a gentleman for whom he was at work. As he could not bear to have a book in his hands, that he could not read; he no ſooner received the latter, than he reſolved to learn

learn Greek: And that very evening, communicated his deſign to a young gentleman, with whom he was acquainted; who gave him a Greek grammar, and promiſed to aſſiſt him as far as he could in his deſign. HILL uſed to teach him to fiſh; and he uſed to help on HILL in his firſt great difficulty of acquiring the Greek language: And when he loſt that friend, which he did very ſoon, for he died very young, he had the good fortune to be aſſiſted, much more materially, by another.

In the mean time, as his wife proved a very good breeder, he found it neceſſary to do ſomething to add to his income; and therefore ſet up for a ſchool-maſter* (1724), as well as a taylor; and had ſo good ſucceſs, that he had generally upwards of fifty ſcholars, for the ſix or ſeven years that he practiſed it. However, there were ſome difficulties that he met with, in his new employ. He had ſcarce been in it half a year,

* For Reading, Writing and Arithmetic.

when

when a lad well advanced in another ſchool, returned home to Buckingham to go to his. In the firſt converſation, Mr. HILL found, that this new ſcholar of his was got to decimal fractions; whereas he himſelf was but but lately entered, and that but a little way, into diviſion. This was a terrible embaraſsment, at firſt; but Mr. HILL took the following method of diſentangling himſelf from it; he ſet his young man to copying out the tables of decimal fractions, from Wingate;

which engaged him for about ſix weeks: And in the mean time, he himſelf applied ſo hard to his Arithmetic, that he made himſelf maſter of decimal fractions, before that time was expired; but to do this he was forced to ſit up the greateſt part of every night in the interval. Another caſe, that gave him a good deal of trouble, was one of his ſcholars being attacked by ſome popiſh neighbours, (1726) in order to make a convert of him. This Mr. HILL could not ſuffer; and was led by

it

it into a paper war with ‖ one of their prieſts, which continuing for near two years, without any other ſucceſs than ſaving his ſcholar; for as to the two combatants, they diſputed on, as uſual, without any manner of conviction on either ſide.

About two years after Mr. HILL had loſt his firſt wife, (1730) he married his ſecond. She was a widow, and was looked

‖ A man of conſiderable character among them, and ſuppoſed to be a biſhop; who lived, at that time with Sir Thomas Throckmorton.

upon

upon as a fortune, for ſhe brought him a great many goods: But not long after they were married, he found his goods continually decreaſing, one thing after another, and himſelf involved in ſeveral debts, which ſhe had contracted. She was a bad woman in all reſpects; and he ſuffered ſo much from her and her extravagances, that before they had lived two years together, the debts ſhe had brought upon him obliged him to reſolve to quit Buckingham; and to travel and work about

the

the country, in his buſineſs as a taylor and ſtay-maker. He ſet out for his travels on an Eaſter-day (1732); as indeed there was but one day in any week, that he could ſet out on; and ſtayed at different towns, in ſeveral counties, according as buſineſs offered, and his own ſafety would permit.

Some time before he ſet out, he was ſeized with a violent paſſion for learning Hebrew; for which he can give no other reaſon, than that he had ſeen ſeveral

ral quotations in that language, in an Engliſh book of controverſy ‡, which he had been ſtudying for ſome time. How very laborious a thing muſt it be, to purſue one's firſt ſtudies in any language or ſcience, without a ſingle friend to give one any advice? And how unavoidable often to looſe one's way, in ſuch unknown paths, without a guide? The grammars he had for the three firſt years of this purſuit, were none of the beſt, they

‡ The works of Mr. Weemſe, formerly one of the Prebends of Durham.

helped

helped him but poorly: His conſulting with ſome travelling Jews, that he happened to meet with in his wanderings, was to very little purpoſe; and there was one difficulty ‡ in particular, a ſolution of which he had been hunting after for the greateſt part of that time, without receiving any help either from his books, or other enquiries. A purſuit ſo tedious, and ſo often baffled, at laſt quite tired out even his patience; and one

‡ The difference of pronouncing the two vowels ſo alike, CAMETZ and CAMETSCATTER.

day, in a mixture of paſſion and deſpair, he parted with the books he had hitherto uſed to aſſiſt him (1735), as weak and inſufficient friends. However, this proved only a ſudden guſt of paſſion; and his ſettled eagerneſs for conquering the Hebrew language ſoon returned again, and grew as ſtrong as ever upon him. Some time after therefore he got Junius's grammar, to try whether that could unravel his former difficulty; but hunted it over and over, in vain. His next acquiſition was a large one;

one; that of thirteen Hebrew books together, which he bought for as many ſhillings, at Reading. Among theſe was Stennit's grammar (1737), which immediately cleared up the difficulty, that had engaged and perplexed him for ſo many years. After this, he went on quite ſucceſsfully, and met with nothing but conqueſt after conqueſt; and conſequently, the latter part of his travels muſt have gone off much more pleaſingly with him, than the former.

All this while, it was neceſſary that the places of his reſidence ſhould be concealed; which prevented his keeping up any correſpondence with his friends at Buckingham; ſo that death had been ſo good as to eaſe him of his greateſt embaraſsment, his wife, two or three years before he heard of it. She had, as he himſelf allows, one child, and as ſhe uſed to affirm, two by him; but the parentage of the latter was very equivocal. However, I think, they

they both died ſoon after their mother.

On the news of this his relief from a Conſort who did nothing but add to his unhappineſs and difficulties while ſhe lived, he returned January 31, 1744, *N. S.* to Buckingham. In the courſe of his travels he had left parcels of books in ſeveral places, and conſiderable ones in ſome; ſo that he came home with no more than five or ſix, the chief of which was a Hebrew bible, and Mayr's gram-

mar.

mar. There he ſettled himſelf again in his firſt occupation of taylor and ſtay-maker; which anſwered all his purpoſes very well for four or five years, in which ſpace he procured books for his uſe, in Latin, Greek and Hebrew: But marrying a third wife (1747), who proved as good a breeder as his firſt, he began to be involved again in difficulties; not by any fault of her's, for he ſpeaks of her as of the beſt of women; but in the former part of the time, from the increaſe of his family; and in the

the latter, from the uncommon dearneſs of things, and hardneſs of the times.

Though Mr. HILL in his whole courſe of getting the three learned languages, had endeavoured to keep his acquiſition of them as much a ſecret as he could; it could not be ſo wholly concealed, but that there was ſome talk of it. In particular, at this period of his life, it was rumoured about the country; "That he could read "the Bible in the ſame books, "and the ſame ſtrange figures, "that

"that the travelling Jews did." Upon hearing this, a very worthy clergyman in the neighbourhood of Buckingham, when Mr. HILL happened to be working one day at his houſe in the way of his trade, put a queſtion to him (1748), relating to a difficulty in the New Teſtament *;

* "Pray ROBIN," ſays the Doctor, "can "you ſolve the difficulty of St. Peter, calling "the ſame perſon the ſon of BOSOR, whom "Moſes calls the ſon of BEOR?" HILL's anſwer was; "That he did not know of any dif-"ficulty in it; that they were both one and the "ſame name: BOSOR in the Chaldaic pronoun-"ciation being exactly the ſame with BEOR in "the Hebrew." 2 *Epiſt. of St. Peter*, *c.* 2. *v.* 14; *and Numbers*, *c.* 22. *v.* 5.

which

which he anſwered ſo readily, and ſo fully, that he took a liking to him, and has been his friend ever ſince.

The ſame gentleman ſome years after ſent Mr. HILL THE ESSAY ON SPIRIT, ſaid to be written by the late Biſhop of Clogher in Ireland; and deſired him to write down his thoughts on that piece, as they occurred to him in reading it. He did ſo; and I am told by thoſe who underſtand Hebrew, for which there was fre-

quent occaſion in thoſe obſervations, that our humble Taylor has proved his Lordſhip to be in the wrong in ſeveral of his quotations and aſſertions in that work. This was the firſt piece of Mr. HILL's, that was ever printed (1753). The next thing the ſame gentleman employed him about, was to write a paper againſt the Papiſts, whoſe emiſſaries were then very buſy in thoſe parts, in which Mr. HILL endeavoured to ſhow, that ſeveral of the moſt important and favorite doctrines of

the church of Rome are novel inventions; and conſequently, that it is they, and not we, that are the innovators. About the ſame time, or rather in the interval between theſe two, HILL wrote, *The Character of a Jew*; when the bill for naturalizing that people was in agitation. This he ſays was the beſt thing he ever wrote, and was the leaſt approved of. And laterly, he has written *Criticiſms on* JOB, in five ſheets; which, I think, is the largeſt of all his works.

According to his own account, Mr. HILL was taken up seven years in getting Latin; and twice as long in getting Greek: But as to the Hebrew, he ſays, he himſelf would now engage to teach it to any body of tolerable parts, and with very moderate ‖ application, in ſix weeks.

He ſays he has read, he believes, twenty Hebrew gram-

‖ At an hour, each morning; and another, each afternoon.

mars;

mars; and is now writing one himſelf: In which ſort of ſubject he ſeems likely to ſucceed better than in any other; becauſe it has been the moſt general ſtudy of his life. Mayr's grammar he thinks much the beſt of all he has read: He therefore intends to build his chiefly upon Mayr's; as Mayr himſelf did on that of Cardinal Bellarmine.

He thinks, he could teach the Hebrew language, even at a diſtance, by way of letters; that

that ſix, or ſeven, would be ſufficient: And that even the pronounciation of it, as it is a dead language, might be taught the ſame way.

It was the worthy clergyman who firſt employed and encouraged him (1753), who informed me of him as a great curioſity: And on my expreſſing how glad I ſhould be to ſee and talk with him, was ſo good as to invite him to his houſe, when I was to dine there. I found him a modeſt good ſort

of

of man; and have had moſt of the particulars before-mentioned from his own mouth, When I was ſaying to him, among other things; "That I "was afraid his ſtudies muſt "have broke in upon his other "buſineſs too much:" He ſaid, "That ſometimes they had, a "little; but that his uſual way "had been to ſit up very deep "into the nights, or elſe to riſe "by two or three in the morn-"ing, on purpoſe to get time "for reading, without preju-"dicing himſelf in his trade."

This

This ſhows his prudence and induſtry; and indeed that he is almoſt indefatigable in any point that he ſtrongly aims at, appears from his manner of acquiring each of the three learned languages, as above deſcribed. I have heard him ſay; "That it "is very hard work ſometimes "to catch a Hebrew *root*, but "that he never yet hunted after "one, which he did not catch "in the end." I believe he may affirm the ſame in every thing which he has attempted; for his application and attention ſeem

to be beyond any thing that one can well conceive of it; without having obſerved him in the proceſs of his ſtudies, as I have done.

He is a vaſt admirer of St. Jerome; thinks him as fine a writer as Cicero; and that no body ever could excel him in eloquence. Yet he ſays, "That "he is not obliged to any one "writer, nor to all others put "together, for ſo many lights, "as he has had from Father "Simon."

As his ſtudies have lain chiefly in languages, explaining texts of ſcripture, and controverſial divinity; he himſelf is not unfond of diſputing. In particular, he thinks the followers of Mr. Hutchinſon wrong in almoſt every thing they advance; and ſaid, "He would go as far, "and almoſt with as much plea-"ſure, as he came to ſee me, "to diſpute with a Hutchinſo-"nian:" And his journey to me was near ſixty miles; and that, poor man! on foot.

Though

Though the relation who firſt inſtructed him, and furniſhed him with the few books he had at Tring-grove, was an Anabaptiſt; he himſelf is, and always has been, a moſt zealous ſon of the church of England; and ſeems to think, that any thing's being inſerted in our liturgy, or any points being held by our church, is a ſufficient argument of itſelf, for it's being true.

Poetry has now and then come in for part of his diverſion in reading; and in particular, he had a Horace, and the Epiſtles of Ovid, among his books very early: But among them all, his chief acquaintance have been Homer, Virgil and Ogilby; and yet as to Homer, he had gone no farther than his Iliad (1758); which he had read over many times. The firſt day after he came to me, he deſired to ſee the Odyſſey; which I put into his hands, both

in

in the original, and in Mr. Pope's tranſlation. He was charmed with them both; but ſaid, "He did not know how "it was, but that it read finer "to him in the latter, than in "Homer himſelf." On this, he was deſirous of reading ſome more of Mr. Pope: I pointed him to the Eſſay on Criticiſm; this charmed him ſtill more; and he called it, "The "wiſeſt poem he had ever "read in his whole life." Before our parting, I made him a preſent of one or two poems,

and

and above a hundred weight of fathers and polemic divinity. I date ſay he will go over every line of them; and indeed, he declared that I had now furniſhed him with reading at his leiſure hours from work, for theſe ſeven years.

It was but laſt April that he was with me; ſo having brought down the little circumſtances of his life almoſt to the preſent time, I have nothing more to add, than the Compariſon

Compariſon between him and MAGLIABECHI: Which, to ſay the truth, was the principal, and almoſt only reaſon, for my writing their lives.

COMPARISON

OF

SIGN. MAGLIABECHI

AND

MR. HILL.

NOW as to the two persons whom I have chosen to compare together, in the manner of that great and good

L philolo-

THE COMPARISON OF SIGN^R. MAGLIABECHI AND MR. HILL.

NOW as to the two perſons whom I have choſen to compare together, in the manner of that great and good

philoſopher Plutarch; and who do not yield more in dignity to the great law-givers, and generals and heroes, which are uſually the ſubject of his enquiries, than I do in abilities to ſo celebrated a writer among the antients: We may obſerve however, in the firſt place, in commendation of both of them, that they were of low birth; and acquired what ever they did acquire, almoſt without any aſſiſtance from their parents, and entirely without the common helps of education. MAG-

LIABECHI

LIABECHI ſeems to have never been at any ſchool at all; and HILL was at one only for two months. They were their own ſchool-maſters; and almoſt as untaught and unaſſiſted as the Saxon peaſant*, of whom we have lately had ſo full an account in ſeveral of our public papers.

Then again there is ſomething extremely odd in each of them, in the beginning of their

* John Ludwig, of Coſſedaude; a village, in the neighbourhood of Dreſden.

application to ſtudy. HILL has no ſooner got a Latin book into his poſſeſſion, than he endeavours to learn Latin; the very day he is maſter of a Greek book, he attempts that much more difficult language; and the bare ſeeing a few Hebrew paſſages quoted, ſets him upon a third. But MAGLIABECHI's beginning is yet ſtranger: For nothing can be more unaccountable than his fondneſs of looking ſo much on printed paper, before he could tell any one letter from another; and, as far

as

as I ever heard, without any attempt, or thoughts, at firſt, of diſtinguiſhing them.

They are alike too in the eagerneſs of their purſuit, and the intenſeneſs of their application, when once they had begun. HILL was happy in lying under his hedge, and reading all day: And MAGLIABECHI lolled and read, for many days together, in his cradle. In the proceſs of his ſtudies, HILL was forced often to rob himſelf of a great part of the reſt, more particularly

larly wanted for one of his weakly conſtitution, to carry on his enquiries; and I have heard him ſay, that he came to think three or four hours ſleep very ſufficient for a night, after he had uſed himſelf to it for ſome years. MAGLIABECHI was not obliged to follow the ſame practice; his buſineſs gave him more time for it, in the day; and very little of that did he paſs, without his eyes being fixed on ſome book or other.

The ſucceſs of Mr. HILL in acquiring the three learned languages,

languages, in the manner he did, is very extraordinary: But the extent of MAGLIABECHI's acquiſitions is abſolutely amazing; by the accounts given of him, he had read almoſt every thing, remembered all he had read, and had each part of it at hand to produce whenever he was conſulted about it.

I doubt not but that it is the ſame with the faculties of the mind, as it is with the limbs of the body, which ever is exerciſed much more than the reſt.

It

It is a common obſervation, and generally holds through the whole ſet, that a chairman's legs will be more muſcular in proportion than his arms; and a rower's arms, will be more muſcular than his legs: Juſt in the ſame manner, if one man was to exerciſe his imagination only, [which I fear may have been the caſe with ſome of our poets] that will grow ſtronger and ſtronger, but his judgment will become feeble; if another was to exerciſe only his judgment, as happens too often

among the mathematicians, the powers of his imagination will pine and fade away; and if a third was to employ his memory only, which I fear was too far the caſe of MAGLIABECHI, his judgment by being neglected would grow weak and powerleſs. This, by the way, has made me often wonder at the practice that prevails in moſt of our ſchools; in ſome of which, the maſters exerciſe the memory of their boys almoſt perpetually, and ſcarce ever find out any employ for their judg-

ments: Of which ſtrange miſtake, I have heard that great genius and poet frequently complain, who ſays ſo happily, as he did every thing, in one of his poems;

"As on the land, while here the ocean gains,
"In other parts it leaves wide ſandy plains;
"Thus in the ſoul while memory prevails,
"The ſolid power of underſtanding fails.
"Where beams of warm imagination play,
"The memory's ſoft figures melt away‖."

That it was thus in a great meaſure with MAGLIABECHI, his own admirers are not unapt to acknowledge. One of whom

‖ *Mr. Pope's Eſſay on Criticiſm*; ver. 58.

gave

gave me his character in theſe words; "That he was a man of "no genius, and an infinite me-"mory:" And another aſſerts, "That he could not talk on any "ſubject, as other learned men "uſually do; ſo that it was a "common ſaying of him in his "own time; that he was a learn-"ed man among the bookſellers, "and a bookſeller among the "learned." However, this muſt ſtill be allowed him that he had ſorted things, which is a part of judgment, as well as remember-ed them, from his giving his

anſwers ſo readily to all who came to conſult him on ſo many various ſubjects. Yet after all, his knowledge in general was only litterary knowledge; and his mind was only, as it was called, a univerſal index of titles and matter: And if one could ſuppoſe a mind annexed to the Catalogue of the Bodleian library, for inſtance, in the whimſical manner Dr. Swift has done in his Battle of the Books, which ſhould have an idea of all the words and ſubjects in the ſame order as they are there arranged;

it

it would, perhaps, be but too like to the mind of Signor MAGLIABECHI.

To come to the points in which they are unlike, as well as thoſe in which they agree, [which is Plutarch's uſual way too] the faculties of Mr. HILL's mind are not ſo much abſorpt in that ſingle one of memory, as MAGLIABECHI's were: Nor was his mind ſo undiſtinguiſhing in it's purſuits. MAGLIABECHI ſeems to have had no taſte for any one ſcience more than

than another*; whereas Mr. HILL's firſt aim was, the getting of languages; and his moſt favorite ſtudy ſince, has been critical learning, the underſtanding his Bible, and his religion. In ſhort, I really begin to ſuſpect, that he is fitter to be a clergyman, than a taylor.

* This is what is generally ſaid of him; and Salvini himſelf ſays ſo: "Non era legato ad al-"cuna ſorte di ſtudi, in particolare:" But then he immediately adds, in a parentheſis; "Se non "voleſſimo dire della cognizione della lingua "ſanta, e delle controverſie Eccleſiaſtiche le "quali egli ſapeva profondamente." *Or. Fun. p.* 14. If the latter was really the caſe, how much would it ſtrenghthen the parallel between him and Mr. HILL?

HILL

HILL ſeems to have been the better Citizen, in marrying three times; and MAGLIABECHI, perhaps, was the wiſer Student, in not marrying at all.

HILL has the greater merit too, in under going ſo much labour, and ſuch fatigues, with a very weakly conſtitution; whereas, MAGLIABECHI's muſt have been a very ſtrong one*.

* "Non laſciando paſſare alcun minuzzolo "di tempo, che egli no' l virtuoſamente impie- "gaſſe: Al che fare molto gli conferì la ſua vita "ſobria, e la compleſſione robuſta." *Salvini; Or. Fun. p.* 17.------"Robuſto, indefeſſo." *Ib. p.* 27.

In

In reputation, there is no compariſon to be made between them: MAGLIABECHI's was ſpread all over Europe in his life time; or rather if we may believe Cardinal Norris, all over the world: And HILL's has little to do out of Buckingham, and a circle of ſcarce ten miles round it; and even there he is not much known, except perhaps to about half a dozen clergymen and gentlemen, who are glad to ſee him; and give him ſome encouragement, now and then, to go on with his ſtudies. When

When ſome of the authors above cited ſpeak of MAGLIABECHI's civility and humanity, it muſt be, as has been obſerved before, only meaned of his readineſs in anſwering the queſtions relating to learning, that were ſo often put to him. By his being compared ſometimes to Diogenes, one ſhould be apt to think that he was rather churliſh, than polite or humane; in his general turn, from what his great encomiaſt ſays of him, we may conclude that he was not apt to ſhew any lively emo-

tions*, either of compaſſion for the ſufferings, or of joy on the happineſs of his fellow-creatures. HILL has very quick feelings for both: And I obſerved in particular, that he had that tenderneſs of heart, which I ſhould imagine to be one of the greateſt pleaſures, that people of the moſt generous minds are the moſt capable of; and which, perhaps, is one of the fineſt ſenſations allowed us, on this ſide of heaven. I was telling him one day of the

* He ſays he was, "Sciolto da tutte quali-"tati umane; tutto dato, deſtinato, dedicato, e "per dir coſi, conſacrato alle lettere, a i libri." *Or. Fun. p.* 12.

ſudden

ſudden happineſs of the famous Monſieur Paſcal's father, on diſcovering what a wonderful progreſs his ſon had made in the ſtudy of Geometry, without the help either of books, or any maſter: On turning to him, I ſaw his eyes were flooded; the tears, at laſt, ſtreamed down his cheeks, and he could not for ſome moments recover his voice enough to expreſs the joy he felt on ſo happy a ſurprize to ſo good a father.

I am very ſorry that there is ſtill one point remaining, in

which HILL is as much unlike MAGLIABECHI as in any of the preceeding. MAGLIABECHI lived and died, as has been already ſaid, in very great affluence; he abounded in money, and his expences were very ſmall, except for books; which he regarded as his trueſt treaſure: Whereas poor Mr. HILL has generally lived in want, and lately more than ever. The very high price even of the moſt neceſſary proviſions for this and the laſt year, have not only made it often difficult for him to provide bread

for

for himſef and his family; but have in part ſtopt up even the ſources for it, in leſſening his buſineſs. Buckingham is no rich place, at beſt; and even there his buſineſs lies chiefly among the lower ſort of people; and when theſe are not able to purchaſe the food that is neceſſary for them, they cannot think of buying new cloaths. This has reduced him ſo very low, that I have been informed, that he has paſt many and many whole days in this and the former year, without taſting any thing but wa-

ter

ter and tobacco. He has a wife and four ſmall children, the eldeſt of them not above eight years old: And what bread they could get, he often ſpared from his own hunger, to help toward ſatifying theirs. People that live always at their eaſe, do not know, and can ſcarce conceive the difficulties our poor have been forced to undergo in theſe late hard times. He himſelf aſſured me, upon my mentioning this particular to him, that it was too true; "But alas!" added he, "it is not only my "caſe, but has been that of hun-

"dreds

"dreds in the town and neigh-
"bourhood of Buckingham, in
"the laſt, and for the former
"part of this year; and I fear,
"we muſt make many more ex-
"periments of the ſame kind,
"before it is at an end."

Upon the whole; I think we may fairly conclude, that they are both equal in merit, as to their induſtry and application to their ſtudies; each ſeeming to apply to them, as much as he could: But of the two Mr. HILL is the more ſenſible and better man; and MAGLIABECHI, the more

more extraordinary, the more applauded, and the more fortunate.

ADVERTISEMENT.

IF any one in this age ſo juſtly eminent for charities of almoſt all kinds, ſhould be ſo far moved with the diſtreſs and neceſſities of ſo worthy and induſtrious a poor man, as to be inclined to help towards relieving him: They are humbly entreated to ſend any preſent which they might wiſh in his hands, either to Mr. Richardſon, in Saliſbury-court near Fleet-ſtreet, London; or Meſſieurs Dodſley, bookſellers in Pall-Mall, Weſtminſter; Mr. Prince, at Oxford; Mr. Thurlbourn, at Cambridge; Meſſieurs Hamilton and Balfour, at Edinburgh; Mr. Faulkner, at Dublin; Mr. Owen, at Tunbridge; Mr. Leake, at Bath; Mr. Cadel, at Briſtol; Mr. Hinxman, at York; Mr. Richardſon, at Durham; Mr. Crighton, at Ipſwich; Mr. Chaſe, at Norwich; Mr. Burden, at Wincheſter; Mr. Collins, at Saliſbury; and Mr. Seeley, at Buckingham: And they may be aſſured, that whatever may be thus collected, ſhall be put to the propereſt uſe for the ſervice of him and his family.